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TAGS: PHUM PREL KWMN IN  
SUBJECT: Mission India's nominations for S/GWI Small Grants Initiative

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¶1. Mission India is pleased to submit 11 proposals for consideration by S/GWI as part of the 2010 Small Grants Initiative. Mission India received dozens of creative proposals, formed a selection committee comprised of key sections to evaluate proposals and select those that meet mission goals and promote the political, economic, and social advancement of women in India. The submitted proposals are from various NGOs that work on issues such as economic empowerment for underprivileged women, gender justice, and establishing trauma centers for victims of violence. We have listed them below in priority ranked order. Complete proposals will be sent to S/GWI through email.

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PROPOSALS  
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¶2. ACCESS Development Services (ACCESS): ACCESS will organize 500 Rajasthani women farmers who grow red chilies into Women Enterprise Business Groups (WEBG) in order to move up the value-chain from solely producing red chilies to providing better processing services and products, while selling, marketing, and distributing chili products. The direct result of this project will be improved women's empowerment, increased income and earning power, enhanced agriculture productivity, and better food security. ACCESS would use the grant money to conduct a market assessment, provide technical guidance in establishing WEBGs, assist these WEBGs in accessing financial support and linking with distributors and retailers, and establish a women-owned producer company to bring red chili products to the market. The project will be sustainable by emphasizing the establishment of WEBGs to operate viable, self-sustaining, profitable businesses. The model is also scalable as it can be used in other regions in India, for other agriculture products, and for other industries such as textiles. Lastly, the project would have a strong multiplier effect as increased services and increased income will open opportunities for other local businesses. ACCESS is a leading organization in India's microfinance sector with successful livelihood projects supporting 100,000 households in seven Indian states. Post strongly recommends funding ACCESS's work.

¶3. Bharat Vikas Sangh (BVS): BVS runs the only civil society-run shelter home in Haryana and receives support from the Government of India and State Government of Haryana. The Home has capacity for 60 residents, who are trafficked women and their children sent to BVS from various government agencies in Haryana; they have a strong connection to Shakti Vahini, an NGO well-known to the Embassy and funded by G/TIP for many years. Haryana has seen an increase in human trafficking cases over the last decade as a result of female feticide and an ensuing shortage of eligible brides; the source states for many BVS residents are Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. This small grant opportunity would provide BVS with the resources to establish a much-needed trauma counseling center, staffed by trained psychologists and counselors, while strengthening BVS's skills development, helpline, medical and administrative programs already in place. This initiative would ensure BVS's residents and their children the victim protection system they desperately need for

survival, while also providing them with the skills to one day rejoin their former communities if they choose to do so. Post strongly recommends funding BVS's proposal to expand our efforts on trafficking victim protection into Haryana.

**¶4. The Practice:** Nandita Laksmanan participated in the FORTUNE/State Department Global Women's Mentoring Partnership in 2009. She is the Founder and CEO of The Practice, a public relations firm with offices in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. As the CEO of one of the top PR firms in India, Nandita has a proven and illustrious track record in media relations, corporate communications, issues management, internal communications and various other aspects of strategic communications to formulate holistic social marketing campaigns for clients. Through the grant, Nandita proposes to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of Folic Acid levels among women and doctors in the three states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The average Indian diet is deficient in folic acid. Additionally, most pregnancies in India are not pre-planned and little attention is paid to the importance of a proper prenatal diet. Folic acid deficiency during pregnancy causes neural tube defects. Nandita plans to generate awareness about the benefits of Folic Acid using multiple communication tools. The program aims to reach over 200,000 women in a span of 18 months. This impact will be measured using quantitative and qualitative tools along with third party perception audit. Nandita proposes to tie-up with People4people, a trust fund aimed at improving the lives of children and adults connected with them, for the project. Due to her successful track record in delivering successful media campaigns for India's best and biggest companies, Post strongly recommends Anuradha's project.

**¶5. STEPS Women's Development Organization:** STEPS of Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, has developed a project that envisions establishing a

State-level Resource Centre to support Muslim women to enable them fight discrimination, violence, build economic independence and personal autonomy. Dissemination of information on a range of issues, from Quranic precepts on women's rights to Muslim Personal Law as it applies in India, file cases on behalf of Muslim women, work at consolidating case laws that safeguard the rights of Muslim women, information on government policies, and empower women, by giving them access to knowledge of their rights and health-related matters. Post has not worked with project partner but is aware of organization's good work. Its President is an IVLP alumnus. STEPS has presented a reasonable budget. If executed by S/GWI, this innovative project will be the first resource centre on the rights of Muslim women in South India.

**¶6. Guild of Service:** The Guild of Service, a prominent and trusted NGO, has submitted an innovative proposal that targets several important issues-women's health, economic empowerment, and environmentalism. The proposal's objective is to provide sanitary towels made from waste materials to meet the hygienic needs of underprivileged women in three target areas--Uttar Pradesh, Kashmir, and Delhi. Since the Guild already has a presence in these areas, it is in a position to quickly implement the project with very little, if any, start-up costs. The project will employ groups of women and train them in collection of old clothes, cutting them, and transforming them into low-cost, hygienically safe sanitary towels. The project would encourage the trained women to form self-help groups that can then become self-sustaining to address important women's issues such as health awareness, literacy, medical insurance, and microcredit as well as provide political empowerment for their members.

**¶7. Health Education and Learning Programs (HELP):** Dr. Sudha Sood participated in the 2009 IVLP on Women Medical Practitioners. She is a practicing physician with a passion for health education focusing on community health, especially of girls and women. Dr. Sood heads a non-profit organization, HELP, which is an initiative by a group of dedicated and motivated doctors and professionals who feel that health education is the best method of prevention. HELP works among the slum population in Delhi delivering free healthcare and health education. Through project "Sunflower," Dr. Sood proposes to leverage HELP's experience to bridge India's growing gender divide by building a women's clinic in one of India's poorest neighborhoods. The project will focus on a slum (lower income group population) in East Delhi and will aim to improve the physical and

psycho-social health of women and adolescent girls in the identified slum community through health services, health education, and craft training workshops. Dr. Sood's past experience as master trainer for United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF as well as the Government of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (the point ministry in charge of development schemes for women and children all over the country), make her more than up to the challenge. She also conducts numerous workshops all over India for health professionals, paramedics, teachers and adolescents. We at Post strongly believe that Dr. Sood with her support from HELP will be in the best position to make a difference in addressing the gender gap and bringing change to the lives of women in the identified slum community.

**18. MYRADA Kaveri Pradeshika Samsthe (MYKAPS):** The MYKAPS project seeks to enhance social, economic and political conditions of poor women in both rural and urban areas of Mysore district. The project will cover about 500 villages in the district. It will increase the participation of elected women members in local government, including Gram Panchayats; enhance the awareness of women and girls about their rights relating to property, dowry, violence against women, abuse at work place; and build the capacities of SHGs organized by NGOs and government under Sthree Shakthi - a women's empowerment program of Govt. of Karnataka. MYKAPS was promoted by MYRADA, a highly-regarded development organization working in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. MYKAPS has good rapport with the community in Mysore district as it has been promoting Self-Help Groups, Watershed Development Associations, Community Managed Resource Centers and Village Watershed Committees. MYKAPS has established local level institutions known as "Community Managed Resource Center (CMRC) which are managed by the representatives of the SHGs. MYRADA is a strong, well-organized NGO which has had a positive impact in the areas where it has worked.

**19. Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA):** SEWA proposes to provide job and skill training to young women to improve economic opportunities in two locations: Delhi and the rural town of Bhagalpur, within the state of Bihar. In Bhagalpur, SEWA would organize silk weavers into a cooperative, provide the silk weavers with training specific to enhancing their craft, help the women connect to both domestic and export markets to sell their products. In Delhi, SEWA would establish a training institute that would provide training courses specifically to women from underprivileged communities. The project would engage an expert to design a curriculum and explore potential markets and employment opportunities for trainees. SEWA is India's largest (in terms of membership) and most well-known women's empowerment organization. It has a long history with the U.S. Embassy and has been visited by many high-level visitors, including Secretary Clinton.

**10. Legal Services:** Aparna Bhat is an IVLP alum who participated in a sub-regional program on Trafficking in Persons in 2009. She has been a practicing lawyer for over 17 years, advocating before the Supreme Court and other courts in India in the areas of socio-economic rights, civil and political rights, right to representation, criminal justice, and violence against women and children. Through the grant, Aparna proposes to create multi-disciplinary support services for victims of sex crimes, particularly incest, in three states in India. Sex crimes have been growing in the country, with about 60,000 reported cases in 2007. Approximately 38% of these crimes were perpetrated by family members or known persons. The project will ensure effective prosecution of the perpetrator and also provide support services for the victim. To make the project a sustainable one, she plans to rope in local law enforcement agencies and state governments. Aparna has a proven track record in similar projects. She has in the past established legal aid offices for NGOs to provide legal services to the disadvantaged, and also set up temporary legal aid centers in disaster-affected area. Aparna founded a National Child Rights Initiative that went on to become a key aspect of the Human Rights Law Network, to better protect child rights in India. She created a national "Rape Victims Compensation Scheme" for the Central Government, and has challenged contradictory laws regarding the definition of a child, age of marriage and minimum age for consensual sex. Aparna also founded "Rape Crisis," a 24-hour legal helpline for rape victims. Given her past relationship with Post and her successful history with similar projects, we recommend Aparna's

project.

¶11. **Stree Aadhar Kendra (SAK):** SAK is a reputable NGO that has previously worked closely with UNIFEM and USAID on gender justice and women's rights. The project's goal is to help create an environment where Indian women and girls can live with dignity and without violence. The project seeks to bring together elected women officials and community leaders to generate awareness on gender justice. Indian states are implementing a fifty percent reservation for women in panchayats (local village councils); it is thus critical to help local women become better representatives, policy makers, and decision makers so they can effectively advance issues important to women. When Ambassador Verveer met Ministry of Women and Child Development Secretary Sikri to discuss the Women's Empowerment Dialogue in November, they agreed on the need to help women become more effective in village councils. SAK's project would do just that and provide sustainability by developing a new cadre of Indian female leaders.

¶12. **Jagruthi:** Jagruthi's project will initiate community-centered responses to prevent violence against women in three districts of Karnataka. The project's goals are to provide immediate and adequate relief to the victims of violence against women and to bring to justice the perpetrators and also promote cooperation of state agencies, civil society organizations and other opinion leaders to collectively address issues of violence against women through purposeful networking and to share strategies and build a social environment for women who suffer from hostile environment. Since 1995, Jagruthi has worked on preventing HIV/AIDS infection in Bangalore. In addition, it works on the prevention and rehabilitation for children in the sex trade. Jagruthi's Home Care Center provides medical and training facility for children victims of trafficking. Post is aware of various successful community-based action projects undertaken by Jagruthi.

¶13. Mission India looks forward to receiving notification on whether any of these excellent proposals are chosen. We stand ready to assist if the evaluation team needs further information from the NGOs. If a proposal is selected, the office (i.e. POL, ECON, PA, and consulate) at the mission that received the specific proposal will be the one to manage the grant.

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